also emerged as a strong market for Indian iron ore.

(c) After a slow down in the rate of growth of the Steel Industry for the past few years due to sluggish demand in the steel consuming sectors, overall economic slowdown in the country, dumping of finished steel by CIS and other countries etc., the industry has now picked up the production of finished steel during 1999-2000 was 26.7! million tonnes with a growth rate of 12.13%. The rate of growth for the past 3 years is as below:

(in million tonnes)

Finished Stee!	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000
Domestic Demand	22.63	23.54	25.02
Production	23.37	23.82	26.71
Growth Rate	2.8%	2%	12.13%

(d) Does not arise.

Approval of 1\irn Around Strategy For VSP

1108. SHRI SOLIPETA RAMACHANDRA REDDY: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have issued necessary instructions to the concerned authorities for approval of the turn around strategy proposed for the Visakhapatnam Steel Plant with the following components;

(i) set off the accumulated losses;

(ii) approval of capacity expansion;

(iii) provision of Government guarantee for raising funds; and

(iv) extension of Govemment guarantee for working capital loan;

(b) if so, the details of the instructions so issued; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor and by when Government are expected to issue necessary instructions?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OFTHE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI BRAJ KISHORE TRIPATHY): (a) to (c) A detailed proposal consisting of dispensations from the Government like setting off of the accumulated losses, capacity expansion, providing Government Guarantee for raising funds and extension of Govt. Guarantee for working capital loan was considered by the Government but the proposal was found not viable. The Disinvestment

Commission proposed writing off of the entire accumulated losses of the company as en 31.3.1999 alujg with disinvestment of not less than 51% of its remaining equity to a strategic buyer. No time frame has been decided for the revival phin r;'" RTN! which *inter alia* includes writing off of the accumulated lo.vsc.:. and extension of Govt. Guarantee.

Fate of Applicants for Technical Operative Training in BSP

† 1109. SHRI JHUMUK LAL BHENDIA: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact thai 450 applicants were selected for Technical Operative Training in Bhilas Steel Plant and all the formalities including medical examinations were completed;

(b) whether 250 applicants, out of them, have not been called, so far, while the age limit of the above said applicants is going to expire;

(c) whether some of the applicants have committed suicide; and

(d) if so, the reasons for not filling up of the posts lying vacant due to voluntary retirement of the employees in a large scale in Bhilai Steel Plant?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI BRAT KISHORE TRIPATHY): (a), (b) and (d) After completion of the selection process for the *po: i* Technician cum Operative Trainee (TOT) in Bhilai Steel Plant (BSP), results were declared in December, 1997. 350 candidates could join as TOT. The remaining 275 candidates were placed on pane! for future consideration, depending on the availability of vacancies. While calling the candidates for medical examination, it was made clear that their joining in BSP would depend upon the availability of vacancies. Due to enhancement in the age of retirement from 58 to 60 years besides ban on recruitment in BSP, the above mentioned candidates could not be inducted in BSP. However, after a review of the manpower requirements sometime back, 137 persons placed in the panel were called for verification, and out of these 125 candidates who reported for verification have been issued offers for induction as TOT in Bhilai Technical Institute.

(d) BSP has informed that it is not aware about any such action.

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.